

**LOUISIANA NRCS CIVIL RIGHTS COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**NRCS STATE OFFICE**  
**ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA**  
**NOVEMBER 5, 2002**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dexter Sapp, Barbara Andrus, Aaron Hinkston, Billy Moore, Wanda Simmons, Michael Jordan, Charles Starkovich, Vickie Fontenot, and Sandra Plunkett

**ABSENT:** Holly Martien, Juanita Hoffpauir, Dan Keesee, Herb Bourque

**OPENING COMMENTS:**

Dexter Sapp opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. and thanked everyone for their attendance. With the exception of Dan Keesee, the absent members had previously notified Dexter that they would be unable to attend today's meeting. Everyone had received a copy of the minutes from the last meeting.

The Civil Rights Meeting proceeded as follows:

**CAREER DAY REPORT.** The Career Day at Grambling State University was a great success. Ruthie Page, Wanda Simmons, and James Shivers passed out about 70 folders containing information about job opportunities with NRCS. Marlin Jordan was contacted by two students the next day.

**SCHOLARS PROGRAM.** The subject was brought up that we need to recruit agricultural majors for the scholars program with the recruitment being tailored to the NRCS Mission Statement. A criterion needs to be written up for recruitment purposes that are tailored to a series or a position with latitude.

**FIELD OFFICE BULLETIN BOARD CHECKLIST.** Charles stated that every field office should have a checklist of what is to be displayed on the bulletin boards. The district conservationist would be able to make an inventory of the posters and other required display items, and then request the missing material from the state office. They should do this about twice a year. Charles said he would check on getting a checklist from his previous place of employment.

**USDA OUTREACH.** Herb Bourque, State Public Affairs Specialist and State Outreach Coordinator, who was absent from today's meeting, asked the chairman to relay to the group that several outreach items are planned for FY 03. The Business Plan has many outreach efforts and a specific outreach plan is being finalized. Herb will have a more detailed report on outreach activities at the next meeting.

**NEW AREA.** Area III, located in Leesville, Louisiana, will be operational in January with Bruce Lehto as the Assistant State Conservationist/Field Operations. No selections have been made for the positions of Resource Conservationist or the two Office Assistants. Houison Horne will be the Biologist for the new area, with Danny Martin and Wendell Meaux as the Engineers.

**CIVIL RIGHTS E-MAILS.** Vickie will send out the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter e-mail with the Workforce Diversity Quiz. Barbara will send out the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter e-mail on the Family Leave/Family Medical Act. Some suggestions on other e-mails were to ask the district conservationists if they could recommend an outstanding district cooperator for recognition by the Civil Rights Committee. It was also stated that we review some success stories from other states.

**GENERAL MANUAL.** Dexter reported that we needed a better complaint process flowchart. It was indicated that HIV is not considered a disability. ADA training is to be scheduled in the future for supervisors to assist employees with any special needs issues.

**LAST CIVIL RIGHTS REVIEW.** As far as the ADA Business Plan, Rhonda Lafleur has a list of the field office inventory that needs to be fixed or addressed. FSA and RD have been notified of the things that need to be done. NRCS will take care of the problems for our agency. FSA needs to take charge of the offices that they rent.

**SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE REVIEWS.** Mail summary to the field offices prior to reviews so that the field offices can review and make changes. The 2002 deficiencies need to be summarized and mailed out in bulletin form for distribution to all field offices to review prior to the reviews starting in February. It was suggested that the committee do an annual report and distribute it with a bulletin. This task would have to be included in the business plan.

The members present viewed the video entitled Alternative Dispute Resolution, A Better Way.

**CLOSING COMMENTS.** The next meeting will be held in February or March 2003. Dexter stated that he would poll the committee concerning the next regular meeting date.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Sandra Plunkett, Recorder

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Date

Concur\_\_\_\_\_

Do Not Concur\_\_\_\_\_

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Dexter Sapp, CR Committee Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Approved\_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved\_\_\_\_\_

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Donald W. Gohmert, State Conservationist

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Date

